

# Supers should be brought on-site 'as early as possible,' designers say

By MARK LESLIE

Saying superintendents should be the world's expert on their properties, designers today more often advocate bringing the heads of maintenance on board early in construction.

"We want them on site as early as possible," said Michael Hurdzan, a Columbus, Ohio-based architect. "There's more than enough work for him to do. He should know the soils, rocks, legal ramifications, EPA

[Environmental Protection Agency] regulations, boundary lines, water, wells, tile. Then, in construction, all the construction methods, how and where things were done..."

"The quality of maintenance is something we're extremely interested in," said architect Jack Snyder of Phoenix, Ariz. "We like to help select the superintendent and have him on the job very early for his recommendations and ideas, and so he can know what's

underground and take pictures, particularly of areas he has questions about."

"A superintendent should be brought in when they start moving dirt, and at least at the point where they are installing drainage and irrigation," said architect Keith Foster of St. Louis, Mo., and Phoenix, Ariz.

"The superintendent can be hired before we are," Hurdzan said. Referring to a current project in Peoria, Ill., for which Pete

Clarno was on board from the start, Hurdzan said: "That's very, very smart on their [developer's] part. I look to the superintendent for lots and lots of input — as being a professional asset."

Jan Beljan, a lead architect with Tom Fazio Golf Course Designers, Inc. in Jupiter, Fla., said at the World Woods project in Homosassa, Fla., the developer hired superintendents Steve Hritsko and Bob Wagner "to assist us in adjusting the clearing limits.

They were the owner's reps."

"The charm of having a superintendent involved in the process early is that it adds another set of eyes," Foster said. "It also creates good interaction. Many architects have a difficult time in that interaction because they think their abilities are being questioned. But I think nobody has an exclusive on good ideas. If we can choose the best ideas to make the holes better, that's what matters."

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## Listen up!

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Jacobsen has returned to Creekside several times since it opened last May and the visits have been very helpful, Wilson said. "We've done some tree replanting to get more sun into certain spots. His input has been very valuable. I don't know if it's unusual for architects to make follow-up visits, but it's very helpful. I've seen cases where golf courses have been torn apart by committees. It would be nice to have an architect at some of those meetings to lend a professional eye."

Getting a touring pro to listen to the superintendent on design issues isn't always easy, however, noted Thomas Schlick, head superintendent at the Jerry Pate-designed Golf Club at Shiloh Falls in Pickwick Dam, Tenn. In general, trained architects seem more willing to take advice from seasoned superintendents than are pro-turned-architects, he added.

Still, Schlick said: "I'd work with Jerry again in a second. But he could bend a little when he gets sound advice from an experienced superintendent."

Against Schlick's advice, Pate sodded a wet, low-lying area and a second out-of-bounds area. He also built a sand bunker on a steep slope in front of a tee. Schlick accurately predicted the bunker couldn't hold its sand during a heavy rain.

"We've made some minor changes to those areas," Schlick said, "and ended up with a very maintainable golf course. It's a hilly site, but there's only one area we really can't cut. Considering that, Jerry did a great job."

Architect D.J. DeVictor was very willing to listen to the superintendent and a turfgrass consultant hired at Eagles Landing Golf Club in Sevierville, Tenn., according to superintendent Kevin Bramer.

"As long as an architect is willing to listen and consider your ideas, everything usually works out fine," the superintendent said. "If we [Bramer and the turfgrass consultant] said one grass would work here better than another, he took our advice. D.J.'s forte was engineering a course that would work, and he did."